

Proposed specialist inclusion base to support social and emotional development at West Hill Primary School – prescribed alteration

Statutory formal consultation – frequently asked questions (FAQs)

June 2026

Overview

The Council is proposing to establish a specialist inclusion base to support social and emotional development within West Hill Primary School. The proposed model is that pupils remain on West Hill's roll and learn through a blended specialist/mainstream approach, where appropriate.

- Places: up to 24 places in total across four classes (Reception to Year 6), built up over time.
- Initial intake: up to 12 places across two classes.
- Planned opening: January 2027 (subject to consultation and final decision).

What is a specialist inclusion base?

A specialist inclusion base is a small space for children who need extra support with:

- speech, language and communication needs
- autism or social communication difficulties
- sensory regulation needs
- early developmental delay
- emerging emotional or social needs

Children remain part of the school, but have access to a quieter, more structured space when needed.

Some children may already be going through an assessment pathway or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), while other children may receive targeted additional support without needing an EHCP. In all cases, decisions are informed by the child's current progress and needs; advice from professionals such as speech and language therapists or educational psychologists; and parents' views and involvement.

Staffing, roles and day-to-day working

Will this change staffing and roles at West Hill?

The specialist inclusion base will require additional specialist staffing over time (recruited in phases as places grow). There will be training and professional development to strengthen whole-school practice in relational approaches, emotional

regulation and communication. The model includes access to educational psychology (EP), speech and language therapy (SaLT) and other targeted therapeutic input to support pupils and staff.

Which pupils will attend the specialist inclusion base?

The specialist inclusion base will support pupils with social and emotional needs who require a more specialist, therapeutic and relational approach in school to access learning. Pupils will usually have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and places will be allocated through the EHCP process (not directly by the school).

How will the specialist inclusion base operate?

How is a specialist inclusion base different from a mainstream class or a special school?

A specialist inclusion base is part of a mainstream school, but with extra specialist support. It usually means children can:

- Learn in a mainstream setting (not a separate special school).
- Get specialist teaching and speech and language therapy input, in a tailored environment.
- Join mainstream lessons and activities where this is appropriate for them.

This approach supports inclusion and helps children develop communication, confidence and social skills in a familiar school setting.

How will pupils split time between the specialist inclusion base and mainstream classes?

Pupils will do much of their learning in small specialist classes with a predictable, nurturing routine. Where appropriate, pupils may join mainstream lessons or activities for some parts of the day. Pupils will take part in wider school life (for example, assemblies, playtimes, clubs and trips) when this is right for them. Integration will be planned carefully around each pupil's needs, safety and wellbeing, through the EHCP and school planning processes.

How can my child get a place at the specialist inclusion base?

Places are allocated through the EHCP process (not directly by the school). The Local Authority will consider your child's assessed needs and whether the specialist inclusion base can meet those needs. If you have questions about placements, speak to your SEND Case Officer.

Site, spaces and practical arrangements

What changes are planned to the site/building?

A currently unused early years children's centre is proposed to be converted into two classrooms for the specialist inclusion base. Two additional vacant classrooms are proposed to be repurposed for specialist base classes (creating up to four classes over time). Spaces are expected to include a nurture room, break-out/regulation spaces, and on-site rooms for therapeutic interventions (for example, EP, SaLT and mentoring), with outdoor access for classes where possible. Any works will be planned and phased to reduce disruption.

Consultation, timeline and how can you get involved

What happens during the consultation period and how will you ensure it is accessible for all?

The consultation process must follow the statutory guidance. Over the four-week formal consultation period, we will be consulting with pupils, parents and carers, staff, the governing board, trade unions and the wider local community. There will be different ways to engage, including online and by post. We will translate all relevant material into languages spoken by the school community, on request and as required. We will support parents and carers with additional needs so their voices are heard through this engagement phase.

What is the timeline and what decisions are still to be made?

The proposal is subject to a statutory consultation and a final decision. The proposed consultation timeline is as follows:

Activity	Deadline
Publication of statutory notice	w/c Monday 01 June 2026
4-week statutory consultation period for proposals. Offer meetings with relevant Governing Boards, parents, school staff.	Monday 01 June 2026 – Sunday 28 June 2026
Report back to Children's Services' SMT on outcome of statutory consultations	July 2026

Officer delegated decision to determine proposals within 2 months of consultation closure date – Director of Business and Resources	July 2026
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Impact on the wider school community

What are the benefits of a specialist inclusion base?

It helps improve communication, learning and emotional regulation, supports inclusive practice across the school, and allows pupils to access a mix of small-group provision and mainstream classes. Local specialist inclusion bases also reduce the need for out-of-borough placements, support smoother transitions and greater placement stability, and keep children and families connected to their local communities, in line with Wandsworth's SEND Strategy and the recently published national SEND reforms.

How will this affect pupils already attending West Hill?

Pupils who already attend West Hill will continue as usual. The intention is to strengthen whole-school inclusion and wellbeing through additional specialist expertise, training and resources. Any building works would be planned and phased to reduce disruption to teaching and learning.